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A
S E R M O N

OCCASIONED BY THE
D E A T H
O F

Mrs. ANNA-MARIA POOLE,
Aged FIFTY;

Mr. NICHOLAS POOLE Jun^r.
Aged TWENTY-SIX;

Mrs. MARTHA POOLE,
Aged TWENTY-ONE;

AND

Master LIONEL POOLE,
An INFANT;

Who all Died in the Space of FIVE DAYS.

PREACHED AT

THE OLD JEWRY,
OCTOBER 27. 1771. *R*

By NATHANIEL WHITE.

L O N D O N :

Printed for JAMES BUCKLAND, at N^o 57. in
Pater-noster Row.

[Price Six-pence.]

A
S E R M O N
W. Musgrave
D E A T H

OF
MRS ANNA-MARIA POOLE

AND
MR NICHOLAS POOLE

MRS ANNA-MARIA POOLE



MRS ANNA-MARIA POOLE

WHO LIVED IN THE SPICE OF THE EAST

THE OLD JEWRY

BY NATHANIEL WHITE

L O N D O N

Printed for James B. ... at No. 17, in ...

Price ...

[Three Six-pence]

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Author of this plain Discourse, written without any view of publication, and now printed at the desire of some friends whom it is his duty and pleasure to oblige, intreats that candor in the perusal which is usually allow'd on such occasions; and hopes the very awful event with which it is connected, will produce a seriousness in every Reader, tending to impress the sentiments more deeply upon the heart.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO



J O B i. 21.

*The Lord gave, and the Lord hath
taken away: blessed be the Name
of the Lord.*

ON the mention of these words, your thoughts will be immediately led to that affecting dispensation of Divine Providence which has so lately passed before our eyes. The report of it has already touched the hearts of multitudes who had no other connexion with it than the common ties of humanity, and the common interest of dying creatures. I am persuaded that you, my brethren, have not been indifferent to the scene. I trust none of you are entirely destitute of that serious impression, and Christian sympathy, which such an event is formed to inspire; and that your spirits, made tender and susceptible by what you have already felt, want not to be roused into sensibility,

but rather to be soothed with comfort. I am sure this is the case with the sorrowful survivors, the worthy remains of a most harmonious, happy and desirable family.

On such an occasion it is, alas ! but too natural to reflect on the great and repeated shocks which, by messenger after messenger, pious Job received ; and I hope it will not be thought unnatural to have recourse to those admirable sentiments of devotion and submission which he utter'd, as what we may earnestly wish to feel ourselves whenever God shall ordain us to drink of the cup of affliction, and ardently pray that our friends may experience, in all the fulness of their support and comfort, now that the hand of God hath so awfully touched them.

Happy, indeed, would it be with any of us, though our calamities should resemble, and even equal Job's, could we but proportionably resemble him in meek submission and patient resignation to the unerring though unsearchable will of Heaven. And happy should I think myself, if in this tender connexion, I might in the least degree facilitate the duty of my friends, and alle-

viate

viate their sorrows, by suggesting any hints drawn from the temper and conduct of this venerable sufferer.

When Job found himself stripped at once of all his vast possessions; when he was fallen from the summit of affluence and prosperity into the deepest abyss of adversity and ruin; when the sweet union of domestic harmony and happiness was broken, and all its endearments vanished as a dream; when the gay hopes which warm and expand a parent's heart were chang'd for terror, anguish and despair; when he had been informed not only that his substance was perished, but that his children were cut off, that the transporting voice of offspring would be heard by him no more, that they were surpris'd in the unguarded hour of social festivity and joy, overwhelmed with one ruin, and mingled in one grave; the good man, we are told, arose, perhaps from the earth on which he had prostrated himself under the weight of his former troubles; he rent his mantle, the usual expression of deep and heart-rending distress; he shaved his head, cut off the ornaments, the useless ornaments which had graced his venerable

brows; and then fell down upon the ground, not in the stupor of affliction, but in an immediate act of homage to the all-presiding Deity; he fell down and worshipped the Sovereign of the universe in language exactly adapted to his real condition. *Naked came I into the world, and naked must I go out of it, the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.*

What an illustrious character! what an example of suffering virtue! how was he exalted by his fall, and when indeed naked of all his comforts, how was he adorned with every grace! We have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; may we imbibe his excellent spirit, and be what we behold. From what has been already said—We may observe,

FIRST, That Job betook himself to God under his afflictions, and sought support not in creatures, but in the Creator.

To acquaint ourselves with God that we may be at peace, and thereby good may come unto us, is, I acknowledge, a duty by no means to be confin'd to a time of affliction,

affliction, it is indeed the great business of the religious life, and should run through all our days of health, ease, and prosperity; yet there seems to be something of a peculiar suitableness in this duty, and necessity for it in a season of adversity and trouble. When men are in heaviness, they are induced, and sometimes even obliged to think upon God. Those who have lived in a state of estrangement from him, are ready to fly to him in such circumstances, as the people of Israel did. When he slew them, then they sought him, and enquired early after God. At such a time, if at any, a man will look to his Maker, and his eyes will have respect to the Holy One of Israel. But with how much greater satisfaction and confidence may those address him when afflicted, who have been habituated in brighter seasons to maintain a grateful and dutiful intercourse with him? Such will find God a present help in time of trouble; he will know their souls in adversity; in the multitude of their thoughts within them his comforts will delight their souls: so that persons of this character, like holy Job, will not be tempted to seek that support
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from creatures which can only be derived from God. Here then be this great example imitated; when our heart is overwhelmed, may we be led to the rock which is higher than we; form this pious resolution, come and let us return unto the Lord, for he hath torn and he will heal us, he hath broken and he will bind us up. While others trust to an arm of flesh, and lean upon a broken reed, may we make the Most High our habitation; for the Lord is the refuge of the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble, and those who know his name will trust in him.

SECONDLY, Job expresses his devout acknowledgement to God for former mercies, notwithstanding the weight of his present trials. *The Lord gave.*

And surely it was a mark of a great and noble mind, that in this total wreck of all his earthly comforts he could feel an affectionate sense of divine obligations. Instead of being entirely possessed with the loss and ruin he had sustained, he finds leisure and calmness to reflect upon the blessings he had enjoyed, and the indulgent hand which
poured

poured them round him. Out of the depths of his affliction he looks up to God, and still beholds him as the Father of lights from whom every good gift and every perfect gift cometh. *The Lord gave.* As if he had said, he gave me my life, my faculties, my substance, my affluence, my distinction and rank in the world, my children and my comforts of every kind; for what had I that I did not thus receive? *The Lord gave; q. d.* These various blessings were bestowed most freely upon me, not as what I could claim, but as the donations of his disinterested unmerited goodness. *The Lord gave; i. e.* gave with a liberal, bounteous, unsparing hand, the living God gave me all things richly to enjoy. Now these are sentiments which we should all indulge in every scene of life: for to a pious mind, it is at all times pleasing to behold our comforts flowing from God, to trace up their various streams to the fountain of his benignity; and this is a most peculiar support and relief in affliction.

But alas! this great truth, the Lord gave, is too frequently overlooked by mankind. With the haughty Assyrian they are prone
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to say, By the strength of my hand have I obtained this, and by my wisdom, for I am prudent. They secretly ascribe their prosperity to their own capacities and application, without duly regarding the influence of Heaven. They sacrifice to their own net, and burn incense to their own drag. Even in the leisure which prosperity gives, and while they are actually tasting God's various bounty, they neglect the source from whence all is derived, and need such admonition as the people of Israel received, to beware lest when they were prosperous and happy in Canaan they should forget the Lord, and say in their hearts, My power and the might of my hand hath gotten me this wealth.

Pious Job, we see, not only in his prosperity, but amidst the shock of an overwhelming affliction, could cherish the generous emotions of gratitude, and devoutly adore a giving God. It is our duty and will be our felicity herein to resemble him.

THIRDLY, He humbly owns the agency of the Almighty in what he now endured. *The Lord hath taken away.*

This

This being the principal branch of the subject, and what on this sad occasion we are more immediately concerned in, I must beg leave particularly to insist upon it.

Now, my brethren, in this mixed state, where God hath set prosperity and adversity over against each other, where indulgencies and disappointments, comforts and crosses, are the lot of all, where we must expect to find God not only bestowing but resuming, where we shall have reason to sing of judgment and of mercy; it is of great importance that we accustom ourselves to observe and acknowledge his Providence, not only in our prosperous but in our afflicted circumstances.

It is plain that Job beheld the Almighty as equally concerned in the very different scenes thro' which he had passed: for besides what he says on this occasion in the text, in another place he reasons thus: Shall we receive good at the hand of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil? He had, indeed, learned to look beyond creatures up to the Supreme Disposer of all human events: for though the Chaldeans and Sabeans had stripped him of his substance and slain his servants,

servants, he did not ascribe the ruin of his circumstances to them, nor does he charge the wind from the wilderness with the destruction of his children, but says, *The Lord hath taken away*. And, certainly, we shall never be prepar'd to sustain the shock of affliction, till our minds are brought to a settled persuasion of God's over-ruling agency in the most distressing affairs of this world; we shall never habitually think all things right, till with this good man we can trace them up to God.

Let it, therefore, be observ'd, that whatever influence second causes may have in producing the troubles we meet with below, these are in some measure to be overlook'd, and the great First Cause acknowledged. One of the most satisfying and comforting views we can form of this world, is, that it is continually under the divine superintendency, that there is no good which he doth not produce, no natural evil which he doth not appoint and inflict: indeed, if we think consistently upon this subject, we cannot suppose God the author of natural good, without making him also the author of natural evil: for how strange would it be to say,

say, that his providence gives life, but has no concern in death; that health springs from his goodness, but that sickness is excluded from his influence; that all our ease and affluence are his appointments, but that he hath nothing to do with pain or poverty. This would really be placing ourselves under the direction of two different and opposite agents, one the source of all our joy, and the other of all our sorrow; and thus we might expect to be happy or miserable, as in their continual struggle, the good or the evil principle should chance to prevail. A vain philosophy, or an unlettered darkness, might dictate and admit such unworthy sentiments; men in such circumstances might imagine, that so much apparent good and evil could never proceed from one cause. But, my brethren, if we acknowledge only one God, if we ascribe the government of the world to one supreme agent, and consider it as directed by one uniform harmonious plan; it will then be evident that evil as well as good must be his production. And if we follow the light of scripture, we shall never depart from the idea of One Author, and One Governor of the

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universe,

universe, but shall equally attribute to him, what we denominate good and evil: for there we are taught, that as in the material world the same God forms the light and creates darkness, so amongst intelligent creatures, he makes peace and creates evil, he the Lord doth all these things. What more positive proof can the scripture give, that there is but one supreme Agent to whom all events are to be ascrib'd than is contained in the following declaration.—I am he and there is no God with me; I kill and I make alive, I wound and I heal, neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand. So that with respect to the variety of sufferings to which we are here exposed, we may lay it down as an established principle, that there is no evil in the City, or desolation in the Family, and the Lord hath not done it. Affliction cometh not out of the dust, neither doth trouble spring forth of the ground. Thou, saith the Psalmist, hast shewed me great and fore troubles. Thou turnest man to destruction. Thou changeest his countenance and sendest him away. When thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth.

moth. It is common with pious persons to make these acknowledgments; thus when Naomi related the devastation made upon her family, she says, the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me; I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty; the Lord hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me. In short, if a sparrow falleth not to the ground without our heavenly Father, and the hairs of our head are numbered, then, surely, what concerns the life of man, and more particularly the removal of a worthy and pious family out of our world, must be an event under God's immediate direction and appointment.

But, my brethren, since it is easier to acknowledge the divine agency in our sufferings than to bring the soul to an humble, dutiful, quiet submission to his dispensations, I shall beg leave under this branch of the subject particularly to shew, that these painful events are not only the result of that sovereign authority which God holds over all creatures, but are directed by his most perfect wisdom, rectitude and goodness.

1.) The Lord who hath taken away our comforts is the supreme Creator and Governor of the universe, and on that account worthy to be obeyed and submitted to by all his creatures.

The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom ruleth over all; he doth what he pleaseth in the armies of heaven, and amongst all the inhabitants of the earth, none having a right to question his procedure or to say unto him, what dost thou? All nations before him are as nothing, and they are counted to him less than nothing and vanity. As the clay in the hand of the potter, so are we and all our interests in his hands, to form and fashion them as he pleaseth. Our times are in his hands. In his hand our breath is, and his are all our ways. The number of our months is with him; he hath appointed bounds which we cannot pass. He is the supreme arbiter of life and death, who alone has a right to determine when his creatures are to be introduced into the world, and when they are to be dismissed from it. But though all mankind are in such a state of absolute dependence upon
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the Deity, that there is no necessity for him to give any account of his matters; or explain to us the reasons of his conduct; yet he hath deigned to treat us as intelligent creatures, and to give us sufficient evidence that he gives and takes away, and in all respects governs us, not in an arbitrary manner, but invariably on the principles of wisdom, rectitude and goodness; and therefore,

2.) A persuasion of his infinite wisdom should engage us, with every becoming emotion of mind to say, *the Lord hath taken away.*

What consummate wisdom do we behold, my brethren, in the structure of the universe, in the general plan of the whole, and in the exquisite formation of every particular part? What reason have we to adopt with veneration and delight the language of the Psalmist; how manifold are thy works O Lord, in wisdom thou hast made them all! He hath established the earth by his wisdom, and stretched out the heavens by his discretion. He is excellent in counsel as well as mighty in working; and every view we can form of creation and providence may induce us to

say, O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God !

Now shall the agency of divine wisdom be seen and acknowledged in all other effects ? Shall we venerate and adore it, as it prevails in every part of nature ? and shall we dispute or doubt it when it comes home to the management of our own affairs ? Shall it be perfect and consummate through the whole universe ? and shall it err when we are the subjects of its determinations ? You see, my brethren, if the divine government be admitted as before explained, that we are reduced to this alternative, either to deny that God is infinitely wise, or to own that our afflictions are the result of infinite wisdom, and therefore, that they could not be other than they have been, without real detriment to ourselves or others. The time, the manner and all the circumstances of his most painful dispensations, are adjusted by the same unsearchable wisdom which shines through his whole unbounded empire ; and what more can any reasonable, humble, dutiful creature desire ?

3.) All

3.) All our afflictions are the effects of God's perfect rectitude; they spring from his love of virtue and holiness, and his concern to promote them through all the extent of his rational dominion; a consideration which should teach us, with the true spirit of submission, to say, *The Lord hath taken away.*

Whatever we may imagine, there is no event takes place but with an intention to make his creatures better, to carry on the noblest purposes of his moral administration, and render intelligent beings partakers of his holiness. Imperfect creatures, such as men are, may correct their offspring for their own pleasure, to give vent to a sudden and irregular emotion of the mind; but the Almighty, who is unchangeably happy in himself, and infinitely removed from all imperfection, corrects his children only for their profit: if, therefore, we have given earthly parents reverence, we ought much rather to be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live. Moral excellence is the highest glory and felicity of our natures; be the present aspect of things, therefore, what it will, we shall have eternal reason to re-

joice in every event which in the least degree advances our progress in virtue. Now, there is no truth more obvious from reason and revelation, than that afflictions are a part of that plan of moral discipline, by which God intends to improve our conformity to his own character, and obedience to his will. The trial of our faith worketh patience, experience, hope and love. It is if need be that we are in heaviness. It is good for us to be afflicted that we may learn his statutes. The servant of God hath, therefore, in the greatest troubles which can befall him, reason to say, I know O Lord that thy judgments are right, and that in faithfulness thou hast afflicted me. If then we firmly believe these declarations, and apply them to our own case and circumstances, we shall not even wish to have any thing altered which the infinite wisdom and rectitude of the Deity hath been pleased to ordain. We shall be still and know that he is God. Shall adore him who is righteous in all his ways and holy in all his works, saying, marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of Saints!

Lastly,

Lastly, Our afflictions spring from the infinite goodness and love of God, which should above every thing compose the mind, and reconcile it to the acknowledgment, *The Lord hath taken away.*

The perfect goodness of the Deity, prompts him to seek the happiness of his creatures, especially of those who fear and serve him, by every dispensation of his providence; and particularly by such awful events as those we have now more immediately in our view. It is an instance of his goodness that he appoints men, especially good men, to die. Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his Saints. *He takes them away* from this sinful, vain, disappointing and afflicted world, that he may exalt and reward them, and place them nearer to himself. The grand design of their creation was, by the discipline of this state, to train them to the exercise of such virtues as might fit them for a better, and then to remove them to that perfect world, as soon as the highest purposes of their present existence were answered. Now surely we must leave it to his infinite wisdom and goodness to determine when that appointed period is

arrived, in which it would be most advantageous for our friends, or ourselves, to be taken away, and when a longer continuance here would not really be attended with any superior benefits. It is easy, perhaps, for us to fancy, if we let affection and imagination guide us, the pleasure or the good we might have received from the lengthened lives of those we loved: but if we speak thus, we darken counsel by words without knowledge: for if it is an established truth, that the removal of pious persons from our world is an event under the divine cognizance, and takes place in that time and manner that infinite wisdom, rectitude and goodness knows to be best (and if this be not true the world is no longer under the government of God) then, we could not wish for the continuance of the lives of those whom God hath seen good to call away, without wishing some real, though unseen, injury to ourselves or them; indeed without wishing that the counsels of eternal wisdom, holiness and mercy were defeated, or that God had altered the plan of his government to gratify our fond and inordinate affections.

Let

Let this, therefore, be fix'd as an inva-
 riable principle, that what God has been
 pleas'd to do is just what we should wish to
 be done, if we could have been permitted
 to look into the counsels of his wisdom,
 and could have seen the designs of his
 righteousness and goodness; and, therefore,
 if we are not satisfied with his dispensations,
 it is because we are ignorant of his perfect
 views, weak and defective in our faith in
 him, or unaccustomed to yield him that
 homage which the Creator may demand
 from his creatures. We proceed to observe,

FOURTHLY, That when Job had thus
 acknowledged the divine agency in his mer-
 cies and afflictions, he then lifted up his
 soul in an holy exercise of fervent and grate-
 ful homage, saying, *Blessed be the name of
 the Lord.* And thus the view here given us
 of his temper and conduct is compleated.

This excellent man seems to have been
 well acquainted with the spirit, though not
 with the words of that apostolic precept, In
 every thing give thanks: for this is the
 will of God concerning you. He did not
 confine his praises to what he enjoyed, but

extended them to what he endured, *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.* Many will not bless God for their comforts, but this pious sufferer could adore him for his afflictions. Like the Psalmist he was determined to bless the Lord at all times, in the darkest as well as brightest scenes, and that his praise should be continually in his mouth.

And now, my Christian friends, you who are so tenderly affected by this awful, and in some respects, unfathomable Providence, and who have so much reason to say, *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away;* I trust you will also, on this melancholy occasion, be enabled to accompany Job through the whole of his excellent character, and with him to bless the name of the Lord. Your trials are great, they are truly inexpressible; but they are not greater than have been humbly submitted to by God's holy and excellent servants. It is, indeed, hard to bring the mind to the temper God requires, and which this text exhibits; but his grace is sufficient for you, his strength will be made perfect in weakness. He can

can enable you to do what you might have thought impossible. He can give you to experience the truth of that promise; As your day is, your strength shall be. In short, however distressing your situation is, it is improveable to the noblest purposes of piety, virtue, and even joy.

It now calls you to one of the highest exercises of submission and devotion to the Deity that can well be expected from mankind; it gives you an opportunity of making a great and trying sacrifice of your wills, desires, and affections, to the unerring will of God; and it will be a most acceptable effort of duty to him, as Abraham's was, when he gave up his only son whom he loved, at the command of his Maker; in recompence for which signal act of his faith and obedience, the largest share of temporal and spiritual blessings descended upon him.

Let me then, my friends, intreat you to summon all your powers, and to call in the aids of reason and religion, that you may bless the name of the Lord.

And, surely, you have cause to do so. Bereaved as you are of great and invaluable enjoy-

enjoyments, and though some of you (respecting these tender connexions) may almost say with Job, Naked came I into the world, and naked shall I leave it: yet you are by no means reduced to his circumstances; you have suffered much, but you are not stripped of all; as to outward ease and affluence, you may still be the envy of multitudes, you have ten thousand mercies remaining which call upon you to mingle praises with your sorrows.

Bless God that you ever possessed those comforts the loss of which you now mourn; here you have been greatly distinguished; as to many, the connexions which should yield them their highest satisfaction, give them their keenest distresses, their enemies are those of their own household; your departed relatives were your delight. True, God has taken away the desire of your eyes with a stroke; but he made them what they were, amiable, endearing, inestimable! and what rendered them so dear to you, made them at the same time fit to leave your society for that of the blessed, to enter upon, and support immortal friendships. You are, however, happy in having been
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enriched with such friends, and such children for a time ; in having accompanied them in their passage through this life ; and assisted in training them to knowledge and virtue, to the love of God and the joys of heaven. What would thousands give if they had so much to lose as you have parted with ? How thankful would multitudes be, when called to mourn over their dead, if they had such prospects before them as you are favoured with ? You have not a doubt but your friends are happy, unspeakably, inconceivably happy. That the Lord who has taken them from you, has taken them to himself. You have the sorrows of nature to struggle with in all their tenderness and force, but you have the noblest supports of religion to aid you, and in time, I trust, religion will prevail over nature, and your sorrows will be turned into joy. There is not a reviving consideration that ever faith suggested, or hope inspired, but is or may be yours. The warmest wish which pious friends can feel for each other is now accomplished in those you loved. There is nothing on earth (except it be to serve God and our fellow-creatures, and improve our minds

minds in real goodness) which is worth living for, worth a moment's competition with what they are gone to possess. With respect to them, your labours, hopes, and prayers, are crowned and answered.

They were ornaments to their religious profession; Christians rather of the primitive than modern spirit. They were constant, serious, and devout, in their attendance on public worship, so as really to improve the seriousness and animate the devotion of others. They were steady and exemplary in their regard to that peculiar institution of the Gospel, which it is the custom and the reproach of this age so commonly to neglect. Even those of them who were young, were not conformed to the follies and vanities of this world; they were not seduced by the fashionable taste for dissipation and pleasure. It was truly delightful to see such young persons entering upon life together, and becoming the heads of a family, with the deliberate and noble resolution, that whatever others did, as for them and their house they would serve the Lord. What flattering expectations did such virtue and piety give birth to? They were

were some of the hopes of this religious society for future years; but the Lord hath taken them away, and they have left a painful vacancy amongst us which will be long felt, felt every sabbath, and every sacrament, and I am afraid not soon repaired. They were the joy and pride of those connected with them. They were ripe for heaven at a time when others have scarce begun to think of it: but alas! (such is the lot of mortality) those very virtues and graces which made their continuance with us so desirable, contributed to make it so short. They were all removed by a sudden, an awful, yet on the whole an easy dissolution; and where the disorder permitted the right use of the mental powers, by a most tranquil, yea triumphant change, so as to leave impressions of gratitude and joy on the hearts of surviving relatives which all their sorrows cannot suppress, which time can never efface, which will remain till the happy moment of their meeting again, to congratulate each other, and rejoice together through eternity.

O that young persons in general, especially the youth of this congregation, might be benefitted by this solemn event, this loud
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and affecting admonition from the Almighty, to do what their hand findeth to be done with all their might : because there is no work, nor device, nor knowlege, nor wisdom in the grave whither we are going. May they feel the force of such rare and amiable examples ; devote themselves early to God, and join themselves with his church as these young persons did ; may others be ambitious to fill up their deserted places not only in God's house, but at his table ; and like them be prepared for an honourable life, or a glorious death, as infinite wisdom shall determine.

To conclude : May the loss of our friends abate our attachments to this vain world ; raise our hearts and affections to a better ; quicken us to get ready for an happy meeting, and an inseparable union with those we loved : may the uncertainty of all human alliances teach us to cultivate an indissoluble friendship with our heavenly Father through Jesus Christ ; and in the remaining periods of our abode here, whether he shall be pleased to give or take away, may we be enabled, in the true spirit of this text, to bless the name of the Lord.

T H E E N D.



